



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

NINE ARRESTED IN MULTI-AGENCY PROBE TARGETING UNAUTHORIZED WORKERS AT AREA NATIONAL DEFENSE PLANT

PHOENIX – Agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today arrested nine contract workers employed by Aramark and Aire Filter Products, subcontractors at Boeing's Phoenix-area helicopter systems plant which manufactures aircraft for the U.S. military.

Today's arrests are the result of a multi-agency investigation involving ICE, the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. Authorities say Boeing cooperated fully in the investigation.

The targeted individuals are foreign nationals who were specifically identified through investigation because their immigration status makes it unlawful for them to work in the United States. As employees of the two Boeing subcontractors, the workers performed janitorial and food services at the facility. Unauthorized workers with access to security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities -- such as airports, nuclear power plants, and defense contractors -- are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals.

According to ICE agents, the unauthorized contract workers used fraudulent social security numbers and counterfeit Alien Registration Cards to obtain their jobs at the plant. The nine individuals arrested today were all identified as Mexican nationals.

"We are committed to working with our federal law enforcement partners to safeguard sensitive facilities and infrastructures from those who could potentially do this nation harm," said Patricia Schmidt, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE investigations in Phoenix. "When a person uses fraud or false documents to obtain a job, they mask not only their true identities, but also their motives and their criminal history if they have one."

Under federal law, employers who knowingly hire unauthorized workers face substantial fines, and in aggravated cases, possible criminal prosecutions. To aid employers with the screening process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that businesses can use to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. The Basic Pilot Program will become available to Arizona employers in October. Interested employers are urged to call the agency's toll-free number [888-464-4218] to obtain more information about the program.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure, and transportation security laws. ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terror and criminal networks.